

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-05 INR-07 MCE-00 EB-08 OMB-01

TRSE-00 IGA-02 AID-05 SSO-00 INRE-00 SS-15 NSC-05

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-----039011 151347Z /43

O P 151050Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7863

INFO SECDEF WASHDC ISA/DSAA PRIORITY

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE//ECJ4/7 PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L TUNIS 5756

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, TS

SUBJ: HIGH PRIORITY FMS REQUISITIONS

REF: TUNIS 5658, DTG 101230Z AUG 77 (NOTAL)

STATE 191898, DTG 122344Z AUG 77 (NOTAL)

TUNIS 5748, DTG 130817Z AUG 77 (NOTAL)

STATE 192529, DTG 131819Z AUG 77

1. THIS MESSAGE REPLIES TO STATE 191898 AND CONTAINS A LIST OF HIGH-PRIORITY ARMS PURCHASES WHICH THE TUNISIAN GOVERNMENT HAS DISCUSSED WITH US AS FOLLOW-ON PURCHASES TO THE CHAPARRAL-VULCAN-BATTALION. IN THE EVENT THAT THE VULCAN AIR DEFENSE AND FAAR RADAR PURCHASES ARE NOT ACCEPTED BY TUNISIA, THIS ARMS LIST WOULD CONSTITUTE, IN ORDER OF PRIORITY, THEIR MODIFIED DEFENSE REQUIREMENTS. WE EMPHASIZE THAT THIS LIST WAS PREPARED BY CHIEF, USLOT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE STATED DESIRES OF TUNISIAN MOD. AS WE HAVE RECENTLY SEEN, WE CANNOT GUARANTEE THAT THE TUNISIANS WOULD SIGN THE FINAL LOAS ON THESE ARMS PURCHASES. HOWEVER, WE HAVE NO REASON TO DOUBT THE VALIDITY OF THE TUNISIAN ARMS MODERNIZATION PROGRAM NOR OF THEIR REQUIREMENTS; CHUSLOTS VISITS TO TUNISIAN MILITARY UNITS CONFIRM THEIR NEED TO UPGRADE

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THEIR ARMOR, ARTILLERY, NAVAL AND AIR DEFENSES.H

2. LIST OF TUNISIAN DEFENSE REQUIREMENTS, BY PRIORITY, FOLLOW:

A. 18 (EIGHTEEN) 1/4 TON TRUCKS WITH TOW MISSILE LAUNCHERS AND 360 TOWN MISSILES. (\$3.1 MILLION)

B. UPGRADING OF 14 (FOURTEEN) M48A3 TANKS TO M48A5 CON-

FIGURATION. (PRICE DATA DUE TO US 6 SEPT).

C. PURCHASE OF 28 (TWENTY-EIGHT) M48A5 TANKS. (PRICE DATA DUE TO US 6 SEPT).

D. 18 (EIGHTEEN) M109A1, 155 MM SP ARTILLERY PIECES. (\$12 MILLION).

E. 2 TANK RECOVERY VEHICLES, VTR M88. (\$1.7 MILLION).

F. 2 TANK RECOVERY VEHICLES VTR M578. (\$1.2 MILLION).

G. 6 (SIX) 105' HALTER MARINE PATROL CRAFT. (\$6 MILLION, COMPANY ESTIMATES).

H. 2 (TWO) 165' HALTER MARINE PATROL CRAFT. (\$9 MILLION, COMPANY ESTIMATES).

3. PRICE ESTIMATES LISTED ABOVE ARE BASED ON THE BEST DATA WE CURRENTLY HAVE HERE. ALTHOUGH WE DO NOT HAVE PRICE ESTIMATES ON THE M48 TANKS, THE PACKAGE APPEARS TO US TO BE ABOUT \$25 MILLION, POSSIBLY MORE.

4. IN ADDITION TO ABOVE LIST, THE TUNISIANS HAVE YET TO DECIDE ON A REPLACEMENT FIGHTER AIRCRAFT. AN LOA FOR 12 F-5E/F FIGHTERS WAS PROVIDED TO TUNISIA IN 1975 BUT WAS NOT SIGNED. TUNISIAN CHIEF OF STAFF OF AIR FORCE HAS STATED THAT THIS YEAR, 1977, WAS THE YEAR OF DECISION ON REPLACEMENT AIRCRAFT FOR THEIR ANTIQUATED F86S. HOWEVER, NEITHER THE FRENCH NOR NORTHROP (WHICH HAS MADE SEVERAL OFFERS THIS YEAR TO TUNISIA) HAVE BEEN ABLE TO BRING THE TUNISIANS TO A DECISION ON FIGHTER AIRCRAFT. WE FEEL THAT
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THE F-5S CERTAINLY HAVE A 50:50 CHANCE VIS-A-VIS THE MIRAGE. A SQUADRON SHOULD COST TUNISIA ABOUT \$80 MILLION.

5. TUNISIAN MOD ALSO ASKED HUGHES THIS YEAR FOR A CONTRACT ON 18 (EIGHTEEN) 500M-D (OH-6A) HELICOPTERS TO BE ARMED WITH TOW MISSILES. THE CONTRACT WAS TURNED DOWN BECAUSE OF WHAT THE TUNISIANS HAVE TERMED UNFAVORABLE FINANCIAL CONDITIONS. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE FRENCH HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO SELL THEIR GAZELLE HELICOPTERS WITH HOT MISSILES; THE OH-6/TOWN PURCHASE IS STILL A VALID OPTION TO TUNISIA. EIGHTEEN HELICOPTERS WITH LAUNCHER BUT WITHOUT TOWN MISSILES ARE ESTIMATED BY HUGHES AT \$18.5 MILLION.

6. THE TUNISIANS HAVE FURTHER STATED THEY WILL NEED AN ADDITIONAL 120 CHAPARRAL MISSILES FOR TRAINING. WHETHER THEY PURCHASE THESE OR NOT WILL DEPEND ON THE SHELF-LIFE AVAILABLE ON DELIVERY AS WELL AS THE COST OF FUTURE MIM72A PURCHASES.

7. WE HAVE REQUESTED A MEETING WITH DEFENSE MINISTER FARHAT THIS WEEK TO DISCUSS GENERAL FISH'S MESSAGE (STATE 192529) ON THE VULCAN. WE WILL CONFIRM THE REQUIREMENTS

LISTED IN THIS MESSAGE WITH FARHAT AT THE SAME TIME.
KING

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